



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0023

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI  
GOVERNOR

SUSAN A. GENDRON  
COMMISSIONER

**EXHIBIT #IV.B.**

**To:** Members of the State Board of Education

**From:** Susan A. Gendron, Commissioner\*

**Date:** June 11, 2008

**Subject:** Major Capital School Construction Program; *Concept Approval Consideration*; Gorham School Department, preK-5 elementary school construction project.

**STATEMENT OF FACT**

The White Rock School in Gorham rated number 10 on the 2004-2005 Approved Projects List. The project will house grades preK-5 and will replace the White Rock School and portable classrooms at the Village and Narragansett elementary schools. The school has been designed to house 550 students.

A complete New vs. Renovation Study is on file with the Department of Education which supports the Department's recommendation to abandon the White Rock School and the site and build a new school on a new site. All appropriate State and local agencies have been contacted; and where necessary, documented approvals are on file. The building has been designed to High Performance standards and LEED guidelines.

The school will not only address the crowded and difficult conditions at the White Rock School, but it will also relieve crowded conditions in Gorham's other two elementary schools. The location of this school is also especially important to the community; it serves the northern section of the community. Once a site was found, the school planning went especially well due to extensive preplanning in Gorham.

The Superintendent has provided the following statement regarding the new school's impact on education in Gorham.

*Discussions concerning a new elementary school in Gorham became more intensive in the 1990s and continued into the new millennium. These discussions were precipitated, essentially, by four factors. The first factor was the age, condition, and size of the present White Rock School. This building has limited space, as does the footprint of land that supports the School and its' programs. Attendant to the limitations of the facility is the lack of access to town water, town sewer, and to three-phase power. The second factor, attendant to the articulated in the first one, was the number of portables required to serve the educational program, and length of time that the School has needed to use them. The third factor was the need to significantly exceed the number of students that both the Village School and the Narragansett School need to accommodate given the small size of the White Rock School. Village and Narragansett are the other elementary schools in Gorham. The number of students at Village is over 250 more than the building was designed for, which has required the use of portables, while the student population at Narragansett is 125 more than that building was designed to accommodate, also requiring portables to support the educational program. The fourth factor that advanced these discussions was the decision made by the Gorham School*

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*Committee in April 2001 to reconfigure the three elementary schools from two schools of K-2 and one of 3-5 to three preK-5 schools. The rationale for that decision is as follows:*

- *The concept of neighborhood schools would strengthen.*
- *Transitions for students from one school to another would be minimized in their K-12 journey to: one elementary school (preK-5); one middle school (6-8), a change that was enabled with the opening of the new middle school in 2003, and one high school (9-12).*
- *Each school would be large enough to offer a comprehensive educational program, yet small enough to foster a strong sense of community.*
- *The schools would provide programs and services as designed, developed, and implemented by the District, thus enabling a consistency and congruence in the elementary schools, yet respect the nuances of each school to supplement and complement those core teaching and learning programs and instruction.*
- *Families and children would be able to develop and sustain mutually respectful relationships with the school community over an extended period of time.*
- *Three preK-5 schools would advance flexibility for the delivery of the educational program and would relieve the overcrowding of the two schools that will remain in use, Village and Narragansett.*

*It was evident that a more systemic approach to curriculum, assessment, and instruction was required across the District and the new school will provide the flexibility and the capacity our elementary school facilities to advance and sustain that core work. During the past two years the New Elementary School Building Committee and the preK-5 Transition Committee have dedicated many hours and resources that are intended to assure that this systemic approach will both enhance and expand the quality of our elementary school program. The design of the new School reflects the work of these two committees and the critical importance of the juxtaposition of the educational program with a facility designed to support and advance that program.*

This Concept Approval is being requested pursuant to M.R.S.A. Title 20-A, Section 15905(1).

The Gorham School Department is requesting Concept Approval for a preK-5 elementary school qualifying under State statute and State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

- The proposed Gorham Elementary School construction project is eligible for school construction under MRSA Title 20-A, Chapter 609;
- The proposed project and authorized method of financing are in the best interest of the State of Maine and the Gorham School Department;
- The Gorham estimated capital outlay expenditures are reasonable; and
- The Gorham Elementary School proposed project is in compliance with MRSA Title 20-A, Chapter 301, as it relates to special education facilities.

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**Project Information**

Project: PreK-5 Elementary School

Superintendent: Ted Sharp

Principal: Margret Evans

Architect: Lyndon Keck, Portland Design Team

School(s) to be closed: White Rock Elementary School and Little Falls School

**Project Budget Information**

Total Project Cost: \$25,833,908

Local Only (no State participation): \$2,480,000

Approved for State/Local Debt Service Subsidy: \$23,192,766

Anticipated Maine High Performance Schools Energy Grant: \$161,142

**CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

The Construction Committee will consider this Concept Approval request at its June 2, 2008, meeting.

**DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

The Commissioner recommends that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to the Gorham School Department for a new preK-5 elementary school in Gorham, Maine, as a Major Capital School Construction Project and approve the concept budget as presented.\*\*

\*Prepared by the School Facilities Services Team

\*\*This approval constitutes Concept Approval. Final Funding Approval may be subject to adjustment under Section 10, Subsection 1, of the State Board of Education Rules for School Construction Projects, which states:

*“Final Funding Approval by the Commissioner establishes the Project Budget and takes place after construction bids have been received. At that time, the Commissioner may reduce the budget to finance the project, thus providing additional funds for other projects.”*